



Vernon Area Cable Advisory Council

VERNON AREA CABLE ADVISORY COUNCIL Minutes of Meeting dated April 10, 2019

Community Voice Channel Conference Room
105 Notch Road
Bolton, Connecticut

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Attending Members: Paul Batterson, Tolland Representative; Larry Perosino, Tolland; Elaine Buchardt, Andover.

Attending Guests: Nick Lavigne, CVC Executive Director

1. **Call to Order and Review of Minutes from Previous Meeting** - Paul Batterson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m. Larry Perosino made a motion, seconded by Paul Batterson, to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2019 meeting. Motion was unanimously approved.
2. **CVC Report** – Nick Lavigne – Nick reported that this Saturday they will be holding their annual Meet the Easter Bunny event, where parents can bring their children to have a free photo taken with the Easter Bunny. They then get a link to all the photos and can follow instructions to download their child's photo at full resolution.

The CVC is still working on trying to get HD channels. They had talked to Comcast about this, but made no progress. He reported that Senate Bill #677 has been submitted through State Senator Cathy Osten and State Representative Mike Winkler. Testimony was heard in the Energy and Technology Committee and the bill has moved forward. Comcast is talking with them again, and Nick said he is meeting with a technology engineer tomorrow. This will be discussed further at the CVC Board meeting.

Elaine Buchardt said the bill would impact all public access channels. She said it calls for treating all broadcasters the same, including public access. Cable companies are following an arrangement set up some 25 years ago, even though technology has changed substantially over time. Elaine noted they have these great new HD cameras and HD feed, but the programming is going out as Standard Definition.

Nick Lavigne discussed the PEGPETIA Fund, which was formerly used for grant monies for return lines, new studios and equipment for public access and libraries. Public access and libraries could put in for a grant through the fund and generally expect to get it, because that was the purpose of the fund. Since 2015, however, they stopped accepting any grants and the money in the fund has been swept each year into the general fund. Despite this, cable providers still have to pay a tax into the fund. Elaine Buchardt said this is the reason they went to the Harford Foundation for Public Giving for funding. Larry Perosino said he will look into the bill and the PEGPETIA Fund.

Nick Lavigne said he has started a pre-production documentary on crumbling foundations. He said he felt this would be a valuable story for the public and to promote the Community Voice Channel (CVC). The CVC provides free classes, holds social events, and promotes various businesses, but doing a story like this one is an important issue to the general public that can demonstrate the broad value of public access television. He reviewed some of the research he has done so far on the topic.

3. **Financial Report** – Paul Batterson – Paul distributed copies of the latest financial report showing a bank balance of \$5,976.97.

4. **Scholarships** – Paul Batterson – Paul noted that the last time the VACAC gave out scholarships they sent letters to the high school principals in their catchment area. This time around, Nick Lavigne had identified a candidate from RHAM High School, and there was agreement that Justin Waine would make a recommendation from Ellington High School. Larry Perosino said he reached out to the Tolland Board of Education and received a recommendation for a student from Tolland High School. Therefore, letters need only be mailed to the principals at Bolton and Rockville High Schools. Paul Batterson noted he had written the letters the last time around, so he would revamp them and resend them. The scholarships will be for \$1,000 each.

Larry Perosino had asked for a statement or resume from the Tolland student and was provided with the material. Nick said he would ask for similar information from the candidate from RHAM High School.

There was agreement to present the scholarships in a separate event at the CVC and to invite the press. This would help to not have their awards be just one of many others presented in a school function and would create a good opportunity to promote the CVC. Nick Lavigne said they could also film the presentation and air it on the public access channel.

The VACAC discussed a potential date for the awards. There was consensus to set the date between early and mid-June, and a tentative date was set for June 11 at 6:30 p.m., with a pizza meal. Elaine Buchardt said they should set a deadline of around the third week in May. Paul Batterson noted he would be away at that time, so Larry Perosino suggested the letters to the principals include Larry's name and contact information.

5. **CVC Gala Event** – Nick Lavigne reported that they are still selling tickets with a goal of 100 total to be sold. Elaine Buchardt said she could probably get friends to take the remaining tickets that the VACAC bought but cannot use. This year's Gala will include a couple of tasting stations, a wine pull and an illusionist, as well as auction items.
6. **Other Topics** – Larry Perosino discussed the streaming service ESPN+ and UConn athletics. There is a new contract, and many UConn sports will be on this service and potentially no longer on the SNY channel. He said he would contact Matt Skane and ask if there are any plans on Comcast's part to add this streaming service. He said they have Netflix and You-tube in a package and they could potentially get this.

Paul Batterson noted that Frontier just cancelled SNY and the UConn station.

Elaine Buchardt reminded the VACAC that she agreed to be the representative at the State Cable Advisory Board which meets about four times a year. She said she believed the next meetings are on April 17 and June 26 and asked Paul to get back to her to confirm if those dates are correct.

The VACAC discussed a date for their next meeting, which they want to hold after the scholarship awards presentation. A tentative date was chosen as July 24, 2019 and they will check in with Matt Skane to see if he can attend this meeting. July 17, 2019 was also discussed as a good date.

Larry Perosino made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m., seconded by Elaine Buchardt. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted

Annie Gentile
Recording Secretary